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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR

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SUBJECT Attitude of Natives/Border Fortifications/ Prisoner Escape Routes

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION 25X1

1.

When the Japanese PW's first arrived in Siberia [fall 1945], the native civilians were very curious and assumed an attitude of slight superiority. They were very friendly, however, and unhesitatingly asked and answered many questions, but after a few months, became very indifferent toward the prisoners. It was very obvious that the civilians, along with the military, were well trained in the indoctrination program.

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at Dohf Camp No. 5/101, the school children had translations of many US books. After mid-1946, all of these books disappeared. Also translations of US books had disappeared from the traveling libraries that came twice a month from Komsomolsk for the use of all Soviet citizens (even their convicts).

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The indoctrination program was timed to commence with the beginning of the Friend's Club and was intensified when the Democratic Group later replaced the Friend's Club.

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There was close coordination between the military and the civilians. The civilians stressed the following point: "Now you are our allies against the US and against all such things as capitalism and spiritualism, which the US stands for; together, we can present a strong enough force to overcome the US so that Japan will once more take its place in the world." By the end of 1946, the civilians placed a great deal of trust in the PW's and some prisoners were even given keys by the camp guards. This along with other incidents, was to convey the thought that the PW's must ally themselves with the Soviets.

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2.

there were many individuals who gave aid. For the most part, the individuals who would assist were older and religious people who were anti-Communist. Assistance was never offered in the presence of Communists. The people who lived in the rural districts, particularly along the rivers, were commonly known as "Tartars." These people were adept fishermen, and in the winter with their dog sleds, they resembled Eskimos. They would also barter and assist prisoners in their escape.

3.

The first year, when the greatest shortage of food existed, food was given in exchange for such items as pencils, pens, soap, clothing, or any luxury item. A watch was the most valuable and sought-after item.

4.

Soviet pill boxes were approximately 500 to 600 yards apart. All were of heavy, thick concrete, and about one-half of them had light artillery as well as machine guns. The pill boxes extended all along the borders westward to Manchouli. The distance between the pill boxes varied depending upon the terrain and the importance of the area. Anti-aircraft extended along the border with heavy concentration around Voroshilov. There were heavy artillery emplacements near every third or fourth pill box, again depending upon the terrain or importance of the area. heavy concentration of anti-aircraft guarding the Trans Siberian Railroad from Vladivostok to Khabarovsk. Artillery up to 7½ centimeter cannon were used in some pill boxes. Fifteen centimeter artillery had separate covered gun emplacements. Further back of the above fortifications, there were open gun emplacements of 40 centimeter artillery. These were well camouflaged.

5.

There were some prisoners and some Soviet convicts who escaped. These escapes were only attempted during summer nights. Escapees fled into the hills and worked south toward the Amgun River. The Tartars along this river, as well as other rivers, helped to make the prisoners' escape possible. The anti-Communist feelings of the Tartars had developed over a long period of time mostly because of the racial discrimination against them by the Soviets who had come to Eastern Siberia. Rumors spread throughout the PW camps that if prisoners could reach these rivers, the Tartars would assist their escape by giving them canoes and essential items. In some cases, prisoners were guided around the Soviet naval and other installations by the Tartars who were thoroughly familiar with the terrain. The Bureya river was another escape route, on which many convicts were reported to have escaped

a PW who escaped in early 1946. had escaped by entering North Korea He jumped off a northbound train which was taking him to Khabarovsk, and caught a southbound train which took him near the North Korean border. From there, he worked his way into North Korea and mingled with Japanese civilians. He was later picked up along with other Japanese prisoners and taken into Manchuria where he was repatriated in late 1946.

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